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ABSTRACT

The comprehensive evaluation of the effects and results of the federal program implementing Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) described in this summary report found that, in general, the program has contributed significantly to the development and provision of public library services. However, public libraries are increasingly being affected by the rising costs of services, which result in a diminished capacity to stimulate innovations and demonstrations. Despite its age of 25 years, the program continues to be of value, and any drastic curtailments could be expected to have significant and long term deleterious effects, especially in states highly dependent upon its funds. The report includes a description of the study methodology, as well as tables and figures of comparative data. (RAA)

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SUMMARY REPORT

AN EVALUATION OF TITLE I OF THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND CONSTRUCTION ACT

By

Joseph Casey
Ronald Linehan
Walter West

January, 1981

Office of Program Evaluation
U.S. Department of Education

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Applied Management Sciences wishes to express appreciation to the following persons who were involved in this evaluation. We are especially grateful to Ms. Dorothy Shuler, Education Evaluation Specialist, Office of Program Evaluation, U.S. Department of Education the project officer. Rodney Lane, Senior Associate, Government Studies and Systems; Denny Stephens, Oklahoma Department of Libraries; Robert Klassen and Shirley Brother, Office of Libraries and Learning Technologies, U.S. Department of Education; Redmond Kathleen Molz, Professor of Library Sciences, Columbia University; and the numerous members of the Advisory Panel identified on the last page of this report. In addition, we are grateful to the many professionals in the State Library Agencies and local public libraries who cooperated in this study. The evaluation would not have been possible without the aid and assistance of these persons. Full responsibility for content and accuracy rests with Applied Management Sciences and the evaluation staff.

Todd S. Tucker, Ph.D.
President

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PREFACE

The report summarized here is the result of a comprehensive evaluation of the effects and results of the Federal program responding to Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act. The evaluation was completed by Applied Management Sciences for the Office of Program Evaluation, U.S. Department of Education, and is intended to inform Federal policymakers who will be making decisions affecting the operation and future of the Program. It is also hoped that the report will be of use to State-level policymakers and library professionals faced with the task of developing and improving public libraries.

Generally, it was found that the LSCA Title I Program has contributed significantly to the development and provision of public library services. Increasingly, however, public libraries are being affected by the rising costs of services and this has diminished the capacity of the LSCA Title I Program to stimulate innovation and demonstrations. Although the Program is nearly 25 years old, there continues to be a need for the Program or one like it. Indeed, any drastic reductions in the Program could be expected to have significant and long-term effects, especially in those States highly dependent upon these funds.

Because this is a summary report, much of the more highly detailed information has not been included. More detailed information is contained in the companion volume bearing the same title.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impacts and effectiveness of Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA Title I)[1/], the only Federal program designed to assist State efforts to develop and improve public libraries. Originally enacted in 1956 as the Library Services Act and intended to assist States in extending library services to rural areas, it has evolved into a multipurpose program that provided $62.5 million to the States in Fiscal Year 1980. The findings are presented in four sections corresponding to the four objectives of the study:

- To determine how LSCA Title I funds have been used by the States;
- To examine factors affecting the use of LSCA Title I funds and the Program-related outcomes;
- To determine what effects LSCA Title I has had upon the organization and services of public libraries at State and local levels; and
- To determine how LSCA Title I has affected the coverage, accessibility and adequacy of public library services.

The research approach used to meet these objectives involved careful review of legislation and literature, comprehensive site visits, a major mail survey and use of extant, relevant data. Data were collected from each of the 52 State Library Administrative Agencies and from a national probability sample of 100 public library projects receiving some or all of their support through LSCA Title I. In addition, a mail survey of a nationally representative sample of over 500 public libraries was completed as part of this evaluation.

OVERVIEW OF THE LEGISLATION, PROGRAM, AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act provides formula grants to each of the eligible States for extending and improving public library services. LSCA Title I is one of four titles contained in the Act (Title II, Public Library Construction, has not been funded since 1973; Title III, Inter-Library Cooperation, had a Fiscal Year 1980 appropriation of $5 million; and Title IV, Older Reader Services, has never been funded, although activities it calls for are provided under Title I). Currently, each State receives a basic minimum allotment of $200,000 (territories and other outlying jurisdictions each receive $40,000), with the balance of the appropriation distributed among the States according to a population-based formula. These funds are used:

> ... for the extension of public library services to areas without such services and the improvement of such services in areas in which such services are inadequate, for making library services more accessible to persons who, by reason of distance, residence, or physical handicap, or other disadvantage, are unable to receive the benefits of public library services regularly made available to the public, for adapting public library services to meet particular needs of persons within the States, for improving and strengthening library administrative agencies, and in strengthening major urban resource libraries.2/

The priorities notwithstanding, the legislation provides wide latitude to the States in implementing their public library Programs. As stipulated in Section 2(b) of the Act, "... The determination of the best uses of funds provided under this Act shall be reserved to the States and their local subdivisions."3/

The LSCA Title I Program

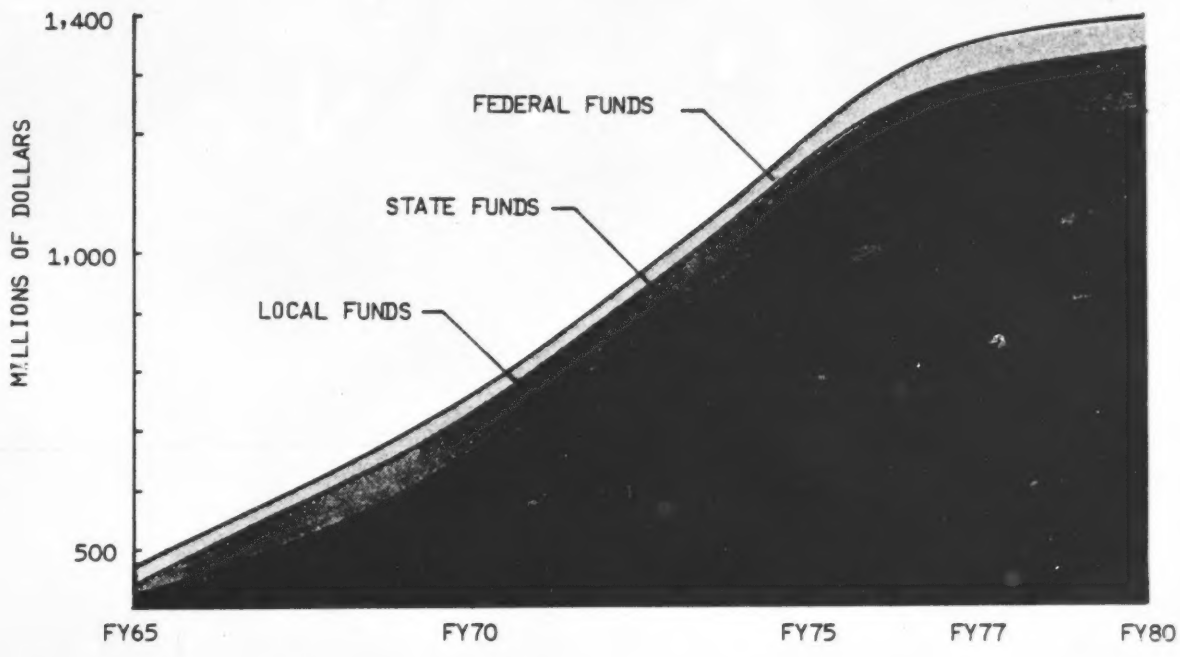
The Program is administered at the Federal level by the Office of Libraries and Learning Technologies, an agency in the U.S. Department of Education. Formerly The Office of Library and Learning Resources, this Federal agency has overall responsibility for monitoring State activities including review of all planning and Federal-State contractual documents, monitoring the use of funds, and collecting and disseminating information relevant to the Program. In addition, this Office provides assistance to the States intended to improve program management and effectiveness. The Program is, in turn, administered in each State and Territory by a State Library Administrative Agency (State Agency) designated by the State. The State Agencies are responsible for developing and implementing long-range programs for public library development, administering and managing activities receiving LSCA Title I funding, providing services, and evaluating public library programs.4/ The law also requires that the States establish an Advisory Council whose membership represents lay and library-related individuals.

To be eligible for funding, each State must submit a basic State Plan, which acts as a Federal-State agreement, and a five-year long-range program for library development. Every Fiscal Year, each State must also submit an updated long-range program, an annual plan or program for expending LSCA funds, and a fiscal and evaluative report for the previous Fiscal Year. Each State must also guarantee a "matching" expenditure of State and/or local funds to be eligible to receive LSCA funding. This match is determined by a formula based on the per capita income of each State's population. The legislation requires a "maintenance of effort" for these

State and non-Federal funds and, in addition, requires maintenance of effort of Federal funds for two priorities: library services to the physically handicapped and to persons in institutions substantially supported by the State. Also, each State must match with State funds any amount of the Federal funds expended for the administration of activities that take place under Title I and Title III. States may utilize their allotments in ways they determine to be most beneficial and effective. Thus, funds can be retained by the State Agency, distributed competitively, distributed on a formula basis, and/or any other basis.

LSCA Title I embodies a Federal policy to assist State efforts to extend and improve public library services. With very few exceptions, the local public library, groupings of public libraries into regional or other cooperative structures, and the State Library Administrative Agency are the primary instruments of that policy. When this Federal policy is examined in terms of its dollar value (less than 4.1 percent of all funds expended in Fiscal Year 1977), it is apparent that the burden of public library costs are borne by local and State revenue sources. Figure 1

FIGURE 1: FUNDING OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES--1965-1980



summarizes the recent historical growth and relative value of the Federal, State and local contribution to the cost of providing public library services.[5] In Fiscal Year 1977, $1.28 billion in State and local funds were expended, representing a national per capita expenditure of $5.91. State level expenditures accounted for 7.6 percent of the total.

State aid for public libraries administered by State agencies has grown considerably since 1965, when a total of $21.65 million was made available by State legislators for distribution to qualifying public libraries. By 1979, that amount had increased to $118.14 million or an increase of 545 percent as compared to a 230 percent increase for LSCA Title I over the same period. Currently, 41 States have State aid programs, the average age of which is 20 years. Using the amount of Federal funds in relation to State funds as a measure of influence, it is apparent that State influence has been growing at a faster rate than the Federal and currently overshadows the Federal contribution.

State Library Agencies

Each of the State Agencies is responsible for a variety of functions including administration of the LSCA Program, administration of other Federal library programs such as the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, administration of State aid programs, provision of services to the public, provision of services to public libraries, and/or provision of library services to other State Agencies. In 1980, 26 State Agencies functioned as independent boards or commissions, 17 operated within State Departments of Education, and the remaining 9 operated within other State Agencies (e.g., Department of State, Department of Cultural Resources).[6] In 1977, the State Agencies ranged in size from 11 persons to 430 persons. State Agencies with larger staffs are more likely than State Agencies with small staffs to provide services to the public and to public libraries. On the average, 11 percent of State Agency staff members are engaged in library development activities while the remaining 89 percent are engaged in library operations.[4] However, State Agencies vary considerably in the use of staff members for library development from a low of less than one percent to a high of 45 percent. Based on estimates published by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies of the American Library Association, a total of $75.73 million or a State average of $1.55 million in State funds was appropriated in Fiscal Year 1979 for the operation of these Agencies.[7] Annual operational costs vary widely from less than $300,000 to amounts in excess of $5 million. This same

source reported that State Agencies administered a total of $296.87 million or a State average of $6.06 million in State aid, operational, Federal, and other funds during Fiscal Year 1979. This figure varies from less than $600,000 annually to more than $20 million. In the five State Agencies administering less than $1 million per year, LSCA Title I funds represent nearly one-half of the funds available to the Agency. In States administering more than $1 million per year, LSCA Title I funds represent a much lower percentage of funds available to the Agency.

Public Libraries

It is estimated that there are between 8,300 and 8,500 public libraries in the United States. The National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, has estimated that in 1974 there were over 89,000 public library service outlets, including the 8,300 central libraries, 5,852 branch libraries, 66,276 bookmobiles and bookmobile stops, and 8,700 other outlets. Among the major or central libraries, this same source estimated that 334 served 100,000 or more persons. Moreover, it was estimated that 611 public libraries are located within Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs); the remaining 5,417 public libraries are located outside SMSAs. The overwhelming majority of these 5,417 public libraries are located in small towns and serve populations of less than 25,000 persons. This source estimated that some 407 million separate print and nonprint materials were held by these libraries. It was further estimated that 5.4 million interlibrary loan transactions took place in 1974.

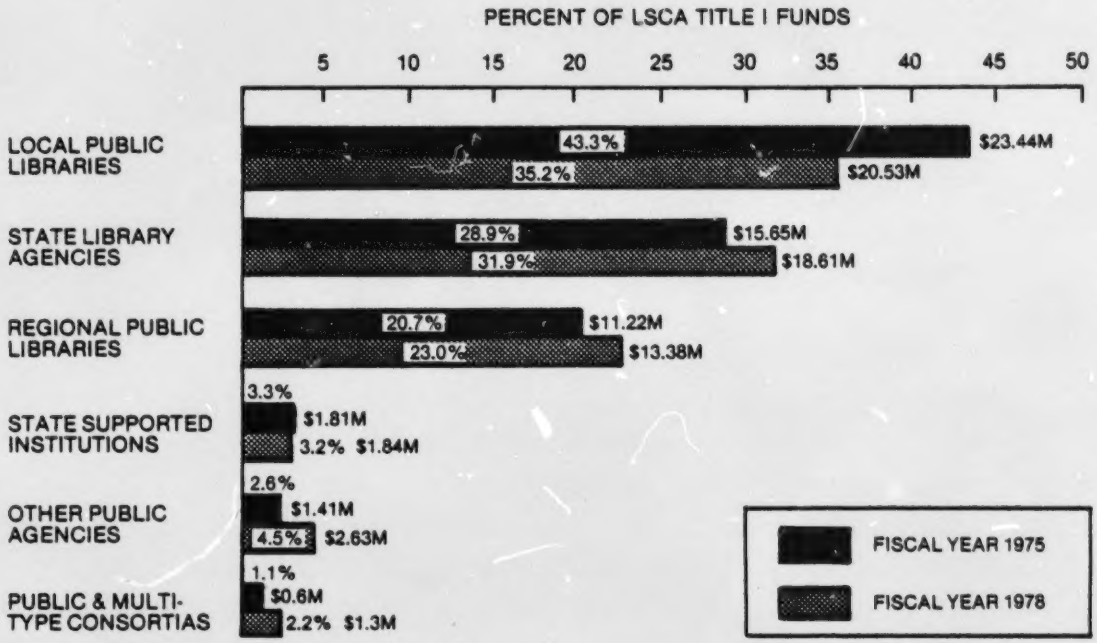
USES OF LSCA TITLE I FUNDS

This evaluation provides considerable and detailed information about the various ways LSCA Title I funds have been used, responsiveness to the priorities of LSCA Title I, how those uses have changed since 1975, and the extent to which the funds have penetrated to the local public library level.[8/] The results of this study indicate that $54.14 million in LSCA Title I funds were expended during Federal Fiscal Year 1975 and $58.29 million in LSCA Title I funds were expended during Federal Fiscal Year 1978. Findings about the way these funds were used are summarized below.

Major Users of LSCA Title I Funds

As Figure 2 indicates, a variety of agencies expend LSCA Title I funds. Together, State Agencies, regional public libraries, and local public libraries accounted for 92.9 and 90.1 percent of all LSCA Title I funds expended in Fiscal Years 1975 and 1978. During Fiscal Year 1975, local public libraries expended the

FIGURE 2: COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES OF FISCAL YEARS 1975 AND 1978 LSCA TITLE I FUNDS BY TYPE OF AGENCY



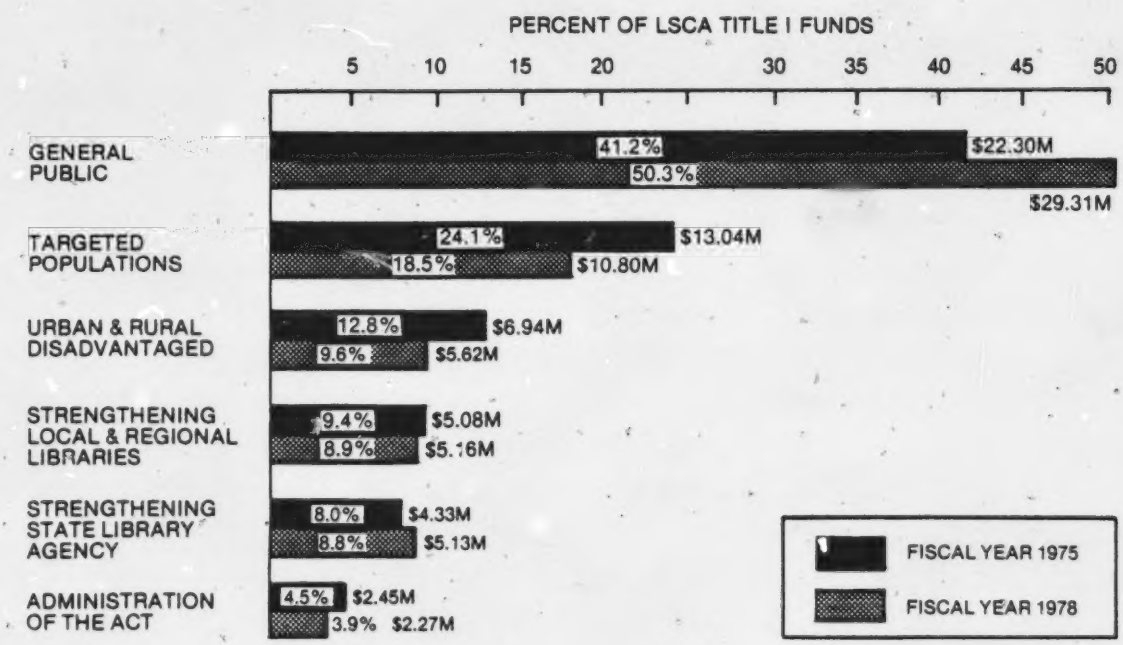
major share of these funds ($23.6 million or 43.3%) with State Agencies and regional public libraries expending 28.9 percent and 20.7 percent, respectively. In Fiscal Year 1978, this pattern had shifted significantly: local public libraries expended $20.5 million or 35.2 percent of the $58.29 million in LSCA Title I funds, while expenditures by State Agencies increased to 31.9 percent. The amount of LSCA Title I funds expended directly by State supported institutions during Fiscal Year 1975 remained virtually unchanged in Fiscal Year 1978.

This shift of expenditures away from the local level is influenced by a complex set of factors. First, because of reductions or ceilings in State funding of State Agency operations, some States are more dependent upon LSCA Title I to support State operations. Second, other States have increased State aid to public libraries thereby allowing redirection of LSCA Title I funds. Third, there is increased investment in multilibrary cooperative efforts intended to yield cost efficiency through enlarged scales of operation. Expenditure of LSCA Title I funds by library cooperatives and consortia increased across the two Fiscal Years (increasing from $0.58 million in Fiscal Year 1975 to $1.3 million in Fiscal Year 1978).

Responsiveness to the Priorities of the Act

The States are provided with considerable latitude in determining how LSCA Title I funds will be spent, but it is expected that these funds will be expended in accordance with the priorities of the Act. The finding of this evaluation is that both historically and in recent years, a significant proportion of available LSCA Title I funds have been expended on services that do not directly benefit the various priority groups identified in the Act. Figure 3 summarizes these findings. During Fiscal Year 1975, 41.2 percent of all LSCA Title I funds were expended for activities most likely to benefit the general public although persons included in a priority group identified in the Act might also be affected. During Fiscal Year 1978, that amount had increased to 50.3 percent of the total. More often than not, these funds were used to support indirect services (e.g., interlibrary loan or centralized processing) that improve the efficiency of operations, or were used to support new activities begun with LSCA Title I funds, or were used at the State, regional, and/or local level to supplement funding of operations and thereby contribute to an overall increase in the adequacy of service.

FIGURE 3: COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES OF FISCAL YEARS 1975 AND 1978 LSCA TITLE I FUNDS BY TYPE OF RESPONSE TO LEGISLATION



Further, direct expenditures of LSCA Title I funds for priority groups (targeted populations) identified in the Act accounted for 24.1 percent of LSCA Title I funds during Fiscal Year 1975 and only 18.5 percent during Fiscal Year 1978--a significant decrease. On the average, these activities were funded at far lower levels, especially institutional services. In States where State legislative bodies limit the authority and flexibility of the State Agency, a lower proportion of funds tend to be expended for the targeted priority areas. During these same two Fiscal Years, expenditures to strengthen State Agencies increased less than one percent. With few exceptions, expenditures to strengthen State Agencies concentrated on library service activities rather than administrative activities. Table 1 provides a more detailed summary of level of expenditure of LSCA Title I funds addressing the various priority groups during Fiscal Years 1975 and 1978 and changes in those expenditures.

Distribution of LSCA Title I Funds

Yet another Federal level expectation is that LSCA Title I funds, because they are limited, should be used to support the demonstration of new or improved services and not be depended upon as a source of long-term funding.[9/] The findings of this evaluation indicate that substantial amounts of LSCA Title I funds are invested in demonstrations and long-term support or operational funding, but that a considerable shift away from demonstrations toward use for long-term support funding is taking place. Figure 4 summarizes the trends in the distribution of LSCA Title I funds. During Fiscal Year 1975, 41.9 percent of all LSCA Title I funds was expended for short-term demonstration activities (projects) while 46.9 percent was expended for long-term ongoing activities. During Fiscal Year 1978, this pattern had shifted: 32.7 percent was expended for short-term demonstrations and 56.4 percent for long-term ongoing activities.

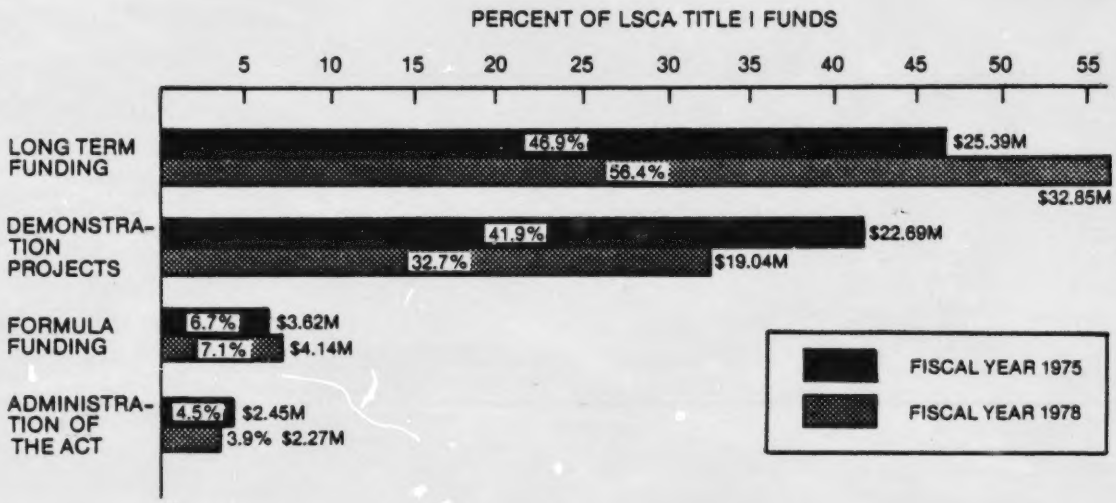
Increasingly, LSCA Title I funds are being used to support long-term ongoing activities rather than demonstrations. Those States with a State aid program for public libraries are more likely to expend a larger proportion of their LSCA Title I funds on short-term demonstration activities. Relative to State funding sources, LSCA Title I funds are more likely to support demonstration projects. Also, when LSCA Title I and State funds are considered together, combined funds are contributing significantly to the support of regional public libraries. Finally, State funds are a more significant source of support than LSCA Title I funds for administrative functions relating to the Act.

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF FISCAL YEAR 1975 EXPENDITURES OF LSCA TITLE I FUNDS FOR PRIMARY BENEFICIARY GROUPS

PRIMARY BENEFICIARY GROUP	FISCAL YEAR 1975 LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE(a) (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)	FISCAL YEAR 1975 PERCENT OF TOTAL AMOUNT	FISCAL YEAR 1978 LEVEL OF EXPENDITURE (MILLIONS OF DOLLARS)	FISCAL YEAR 1978 PERCENT OF TOTAL AMOUNT	PERCENT CHANGE
Total All Projects	$54.14	100.0%	$58.29	100.0%	N/A
Urban Disadvantaged	3.29	6.1	1.43	2.5	-3.6%
Rural Disadvantaged	3.43	6.3	3.40	5.8	-0.5
Urban and Rural Disadvantaged	0.22	4.0	.79	1.6	-2.4
Blind and Physically Handicapped Persons	3.17	5.9	3.62	6.2	+0.3
Limited English-Speaking Persons	1.42	2.6	.73	1.3	-1.3
Native Americans	.11	0.2	.31	.5	+0.3
Residents of State Supported Institutions	3.35	6.2	3.09	5.3	-0.9
Special Target Groups(b)	4.99	9.2	3.05	5.2	-4.0
Strengthening State Library Administrative Agencies	4.33	8.0	5.13	8.8	+0.8
Strengthening Metropolitan Public Libraries	1.72	3.2	1.50	2.6	-0.6
Strengthening Local Public Libraries	2.91	5.4	2.16	3.7	-1.7
Public Librarians	.45	0.8	1.50	2.6	+1.8
The General Public	22.30	41.2	29.31	50.3	+9.1
Cost of Administering the Act	2.45	4.5	2.27	3.9	-0.6

(a) Figures are rounded off.
(b) Including older persons, hearing impaired persons, children and youth.

FIGURE 4: COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES OF FISCAL YEARS 1975 AND 1978 LSCA TITLE I FUNDS BY TYPE OF USE



Impact of Inflation on the Use of LSCA Title I Funds

A major factor influencing the use of LSCA Title I funds may be inflation. When Fiscal Year 1980 expenditures of LSCA Title I funds are adjusted to be comparable with Fiscal Year 1975 expenditures, the following is revealed. First, the overall amount of Fiscal Year 1978 funds expended ($58.29 million, unadjusted) is 10.5 percent less than the Fiscal Year 1975 amount. That is, while the amount of funds increased between the two years, the real purchasing power dropped significantly. As might be expected, inflation had its greatest effect in instances where there was low or no growth in funding levels. For example, when the effects of inflation are considered, the value of LSCA Title I funds expended by local public libraries actually decreased by 27.2 percent between Fiscal Years 1975 and 1978. Similarly, LSCA Title I funding for activities responding to LSCA Title I priority groups dropped an average of 25 percent. Further, expenditures for demonstrations decreased by 29.8 percent while expenditures for long-term ongoing activities increased by 10.4 percent. Inflation helps to explain the apparent trend toward increased expenditures for long-term and basic services of public libraries and

activities, such as regional libraries, that should result in long-term cost efficiencies provided through consolidation of duplicative activities. The effects of inflation are summarized in Figures 5 and 6 and can be contrasted with Figures 2 and 4.

Characteristics of Projects Receiving LSCA Title I Support

Estimates based on data for a sample LSCA Title I project reveal that 14 percent of all Fiscal Year 1978 projects provided nontraditional and innovative (e.g., outreach) services. Thirty-five percent of the projects provided traditional services, while the remaining 51 percent engaged in a mix of traditional and nontraditional services. Among this same sample, 36 percent of the projects were determined to be addressing the service needs of a specific LSCA Title I priority. The remaining 64 percent were either addressing multiple priority groups or were concerned with issues not directly related to the needs of these groups--a more likely situation. Also, 21 percent of the sample of projects were engaged in activities intended to improve and/or increase the accessibility of resources (e.g., interlibrary cooperation, automation of circulation systems). Major objectives of these projects included:

- Acquisition of print and nonprint materials and/or provision of services intended primarily for the general public--54 percent of all projects;
- Some form of interlibrary cooperation--44 percent of all projects;
- Acquisition of specialized materials and/or provision of services intended for groups with special needs--38 percent of all projects; and
- Provision of specialized outreach services intended to extend services to populations with special needs--21 percent of all projects.

These objectives suggest that projects concentrate primarily upon services and/or acquisition of materials, a finding that is consistent with the character of public libraries.

Penetration of LSCA Title I Funds to the Local Level

On the basis of this evaluation, it is estimated that 32.9 percent of all public libraries in the United States have received at least one direct LSCA Title I grant since 1965. In spite of this apparently low percentage of public libraries, it is estimated that only 6 percent of all public libraries failed to receive at least one direct benefit from the LSCA Title I Program. Also, the public libraries receiving at least one grant serve an estimated 138.34 million persons or 69 percent of the

FIGURE 5: COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES OF FISCAL YEAR 1975 FUNDS WITH FISCAL YEAR 1978 FUNDS AFTER ADJUSTMENT FOR INFLATION BY TYPE OF AGENCY

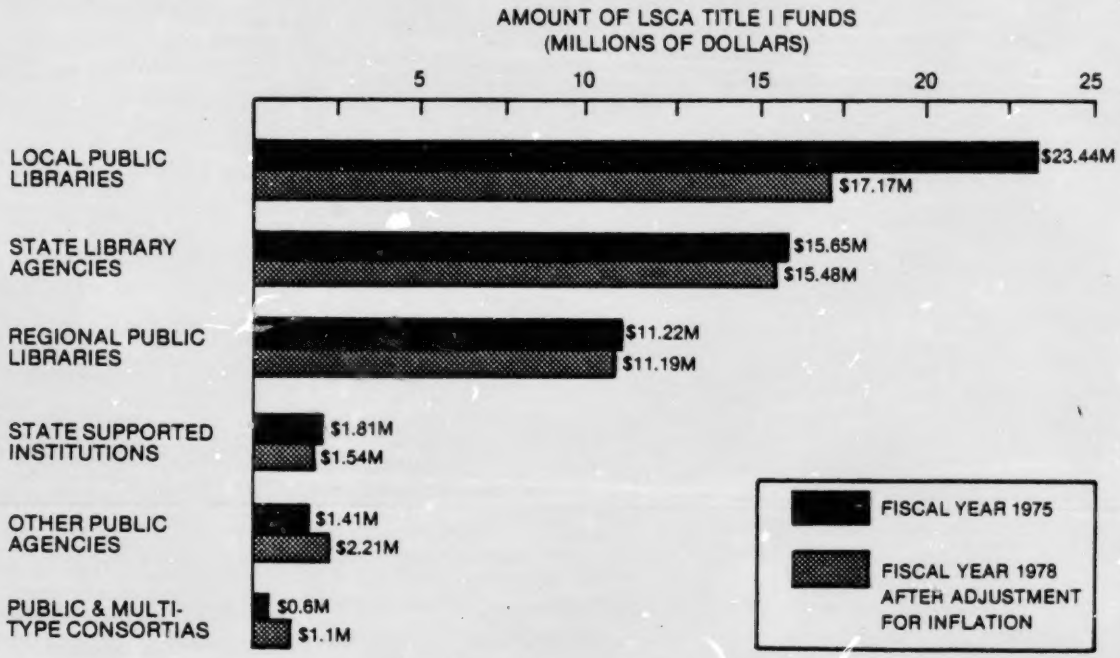
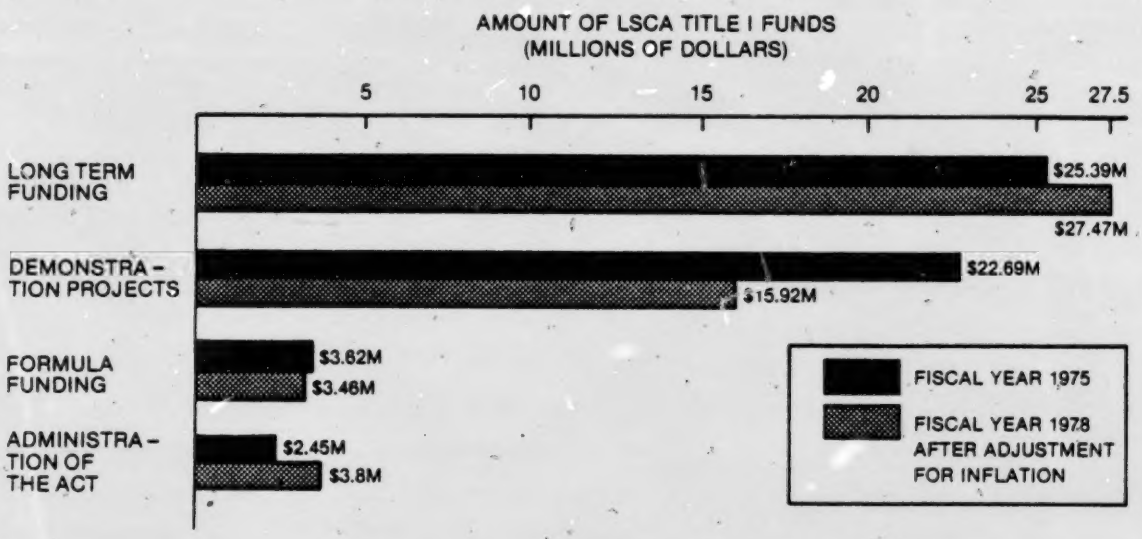
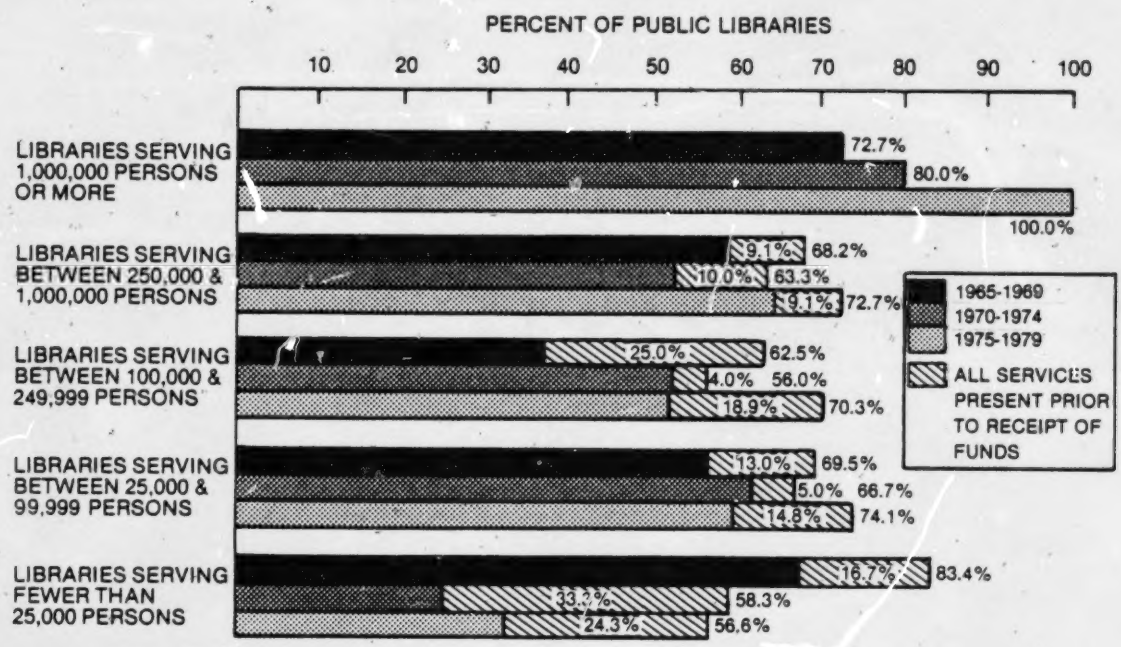


FIGURE 6: COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURES OF FISCAL YEAR 1975 FUNDS WITH FISCAL YEAR 1978 FUNDS AFTER ADJUSTMENT FOR INFLATION BY TYPE OF EXPENDITURE



Nation's population. Public libraries serving populations of 100,000 or more are far more likely to report the receipt of a direct grant (81.4 percent as opposed to 25.4 percent for public libraries serving fewer than 100,000 persons). Among the public libraries receiving LSCA Title I funds directly, there is a general tendency to include at least one priority group in the services being supported; however, it is far less likely that all funds will be utilized to support specialized service(s) responsive to a single priority. This pattern has remained unchanged over time. Also, among public libraries receiving a LSCA Title I grant, over half reported that services supported with the grant were in existence prior to its receipt. Figure 7 demonstrates this pattern for each of five different public library size categories. Finally, these same public libraries report a high incidence of involvement of other public libraries in the provision of LSCA Title I supported services--a trend that appears to have strengthened over time.

FIGURE 7: COMPARISON OF EXTENT TO WHICH LSCA TITLE I SUPPORTED SERVICES WERE PRESENT AT PUBLIC LIBRARIES PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF FUNDS BY SIZE OF PUBLIC LIBRARY



Overall, larger public libraries are most likely to receive LSCA Title I grants directly; there is only modest targeting of services to specific groups or target populations; more often than not, LSCA Title I funds have not been used to initiate new services; and, there is extensive involvement of other public libraries in the provision of services or conduct of activities receiving LSCA Title I support at the local level. In isolation, the above finding suggests only limited Program effects at the local level. However, benefits of activities funded at the State, regional, and local levels have extended to virtually all public libraries. Indeed, it is only among the smallest of public libraries (those serving fewer than 25,000 persons) that these benefits have not been reported.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE USE OF LSCA TITLE I FUNDS

A number of factors influence the use of LSCA Title I funds and the effects that these uses have for public libraries and public library users. Salient factors and influences were found to operate at the State and project levels. The findings summarized here are indications of those factors that do influence or explain variations in the uses of and effects of LSCA Title I funds for which data were available.

State Level Factors

The findings of this evaluation indicate that decisions about the use of LSCA Title I funds by States are affected and influenced by the organizational structure of public libraries, features of the States resident populations, and State governmental factors. The distribution of LSCA Title I funds to the State, regional, and local levels is influenced by the presence of a State aid program for libraries. States with a State aid program spend half as much of their LSCA Title I funds at the State level as do States without any State aid program (36.5 percent among States with State aid and 77.2 percent among States without State aid). Consequently, States with a State aid program channel more of their LSCA Title I funds to regional and local libraries. Those States with a State aid program for libraries also expend a larger proportion of their LSCA Title I funds on short-term demonstration activities. Those few States without a State aid program are less likely to expend significant amounts of LSCA Title I funds to demonstrate new programs of services.

Another major finding concerns the effects of State-level legislative constraints on the use of LSCA Title I funds. In those States where State Agency officials perceive their legislatures as limiting the authority and flexibility of the

State Agency in the expenditures of Federal funds, more of these funds were expended at regional and local levels and less by the State Agency. These same constraints result in less LSCA Title I money being spent on projects and activities specifically targeted to the priority populations. In these States, funds are more likely to be channeled into activities that tend to benefit the general public.

A third influence on the use of LSCA Title I funds is the characteristics of a State or the context within which the program operates. The most significant factors are population size, population density, and per capita income. Each of these factors exercises an influence on the use of LSCA Title I funds for demonstrations and response to the priority groups identified by the Act. The lesser populated States are likely to spend greater amounts of funds at the State level. Also, among the few States without a State aid for public libraries, the more densely populated States were more likely to spend a higher proportion of their funds on demonstration projects and on services for priority groups.

Project Level Factors

Analysis of the services of LSCA Title I projects tend to suggest that the types of services and activities of these projects are influenced by the administrative locus of the projects and the funding level. Projects administered at the State or regional level differ from projects administered locally in terms of the types of services and activities they provide with LSCA Title I funds. While a large percentage of State and regionally operated projects use LSCA Title I funds to provide support services to other libraries (indirect services), a much smaller percent of the projects administered by local libraries use their LSCA Title I funds for these services. Instead, projects administered at the local level are most likely to provide direct service to library users (both traditional and nontraditional users) and are very likely to use their LSCA Title I funds to provide additional books and reading materials for their user populations. These additions may involve general collection development or the acquisition of specialized materials. Locally administered projects use LSCA Title I funding to a greater extent than State and regional projects to provide additional audio-visual materials to their clients.

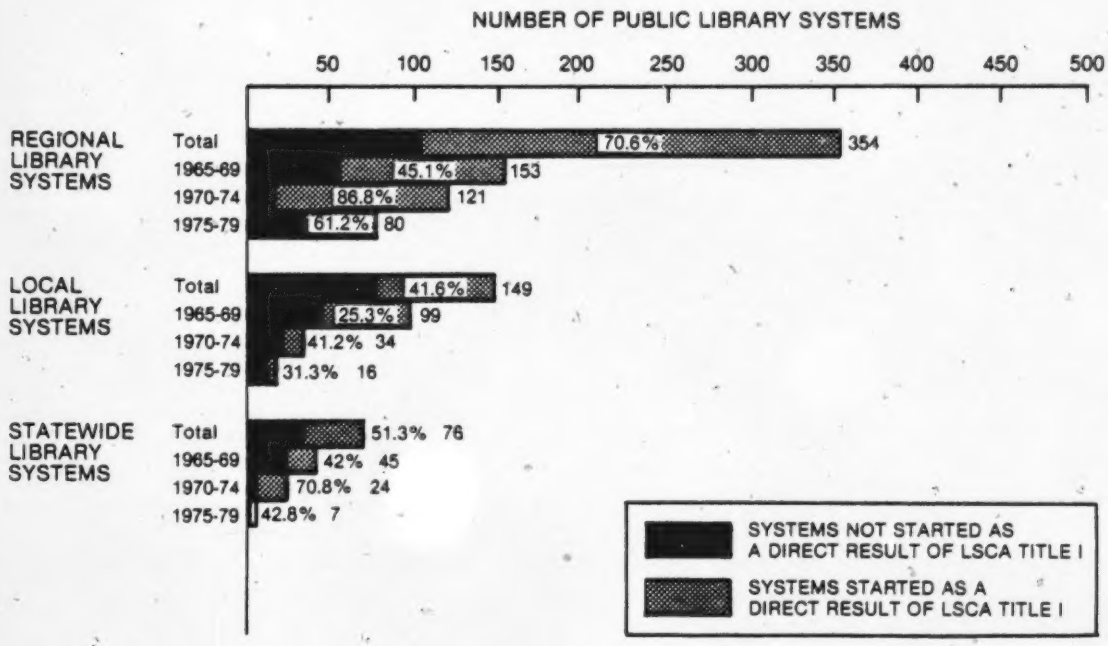
The findings also suggest that projects funded at higher levels are generally not targeted toward any of the priority groups identified in the legislation. Instead they are most likely to support library operations rather than provide direct service to

library users. Targeted projects, on the other hand, are funded at lower levels but offer a larger number and variety of direct services to users (e.g., books-by-mail, bookmobile service, additional printed and audio-visual materials).

EFFECTS OF LSCA TITLE I ON PUBLIC LIBRARY STRUCTURE AND SERVICES

LSCA Title I has had a tangible and significant effect upon the structure of public libraries. It has also had an important effect upon the types and ways in which library services are delivered to the public. In some instances, these changes are related to a response to one or more of the LSCA Title I priorities (e.g., introduction of bilingual materials as a means of providing services to limited English-speaking persons). More often these changes are intended to improve the quality and responsiveness of services, and thereby increase the adequacy of services and materials provided by public libraries. The major findings on the effects of LSCA Title I on public library services and structure are summarized below.

FIGURE 8: COMPARISON OF DIRECT INFLUENCE OF LSCA TITLE I ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SYSTEMS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES



Public Library Structure

The most significant area of change induced and/or significantly contributed to by LSCA Title I has been in the establishment of regional systems of public libraries. Since 1965, LSCA Title I funds have been directly involved in the establishment of 62 percent of 579 Statewide, regional and local library systems. The heaviest area of involvement has been at the regional level where LSCA Title I funds were used in establishing 70.6 percent of these systems. This trend of involvement since 1965 is summarized in Figure 8. LSCA Title I has had a more marked effect in rural and high poverty level States--States that traditionally have a greater need for improvement. Moreover, States have expended significant amounts of funds for the development and operation of systems of libraries. During Fiscal Year 1978, $67.06 million or 28.76 percent of all combined LSCA Title I and State funds under the control of State Agencies were expended in support of the operation and services of regional library systems.

In some instances, these expenditures have been translated into direct services to the public (e.g., bookmobiles or books-by-mail). However, in most instances expenditures are intended to improve the ability of regional libraries to assist local libraries through interlibrary loan and delivery systems that respond to information requests by users residing in the region and through development and expansion of resource library collections. Other major types of support or indirect services include centralized purchasing, cataloging, and processing of materials, linkage with major bibliographic processing centers such as OCLC, Inc., and access to computerized data bases. Not only have systems of public libraries been established, 87.3 percent of all State Agency respondents agreed that LSCA Title I had been instrumental in increasing public library reliance on regional system resources. In a number of instances, the State Agencies will act as the hub of regional library systems and provide linkages to resources outside the jurisdictions served by systems.

LSCA Title I has also had a profound effect upon many State Agencies as public library service agencies. When LSCA was enacted in 1956, each State was required to designate a State Agency responsible for administering Federal funds received under terms of the Act. At that time, only a small number of States had agencies concerned with library extension and administration of State aid programs although all States had a State library serving State government. LSCA provided the basis for establishing a common set of State Agencies and this in turn resulted in two

changes. First, State government began to assume an increasing role in efforts to establish and coordinate the development and provision of public library services. Second, State Agencies began to provide certain services on a Statewide basis directly or through contracts with large libraries. This was particularly true in those States that either did not have regional systems or in States where public libraries were relatively new and small.

The States also have assumed a major responsibility for planning as a direct result of LSCA and this is an important development. However, many of the States have prepared long-range programs that comply with the requirements of the Act but cannot be considered good and workable. Often these plans are general and do not provide measurable or useful outcomes against which progress can be determined. Although considerable Federal effort was made in 1972 to assist the States, it appears that for many States, these efforts did not have long-term effects, in large part, due to substantial staff turnover among State Agencies and the complexity of the planning model.

Public Library Services

Using LSCA Title I funds, State Agencies have been able to introduce a variety of new services to public libraries. Major changes have occurred in the area of new technology, community outreach, introduction of audio-visual materials responding to the needs of nontraditional clients, and continuing education for librarians. Each of these new services were reported by 90 percent or more of the States. Many of these new services appear to be adaptations to existing services rather than completely new forms of service. New services least often cited were those involving nontraditional programs that public libraries have not historically provided (e.g., environmental educatior, career education, business-oriented services). Fewer than 40 percent of the States reported that these services were added. An adjunct point is that among the sample of Fiscal Year 1978 LSCA Title I projects visited in this study, those started with LSCA Title I funds were more likely to result in significant changes in services to the public than activities not originally begun with LSCA Title I funds. Moreover, when LSCA Title I projects were operated at the local level, they were more likely to produce significant changes in services.

The most significant finding concerning the effect of LSCA Title I on public library services is that an estimated 94 percent of the nation's public libraries (serving an estimated 197.8 million persons) were able in 1980 to cite at least one

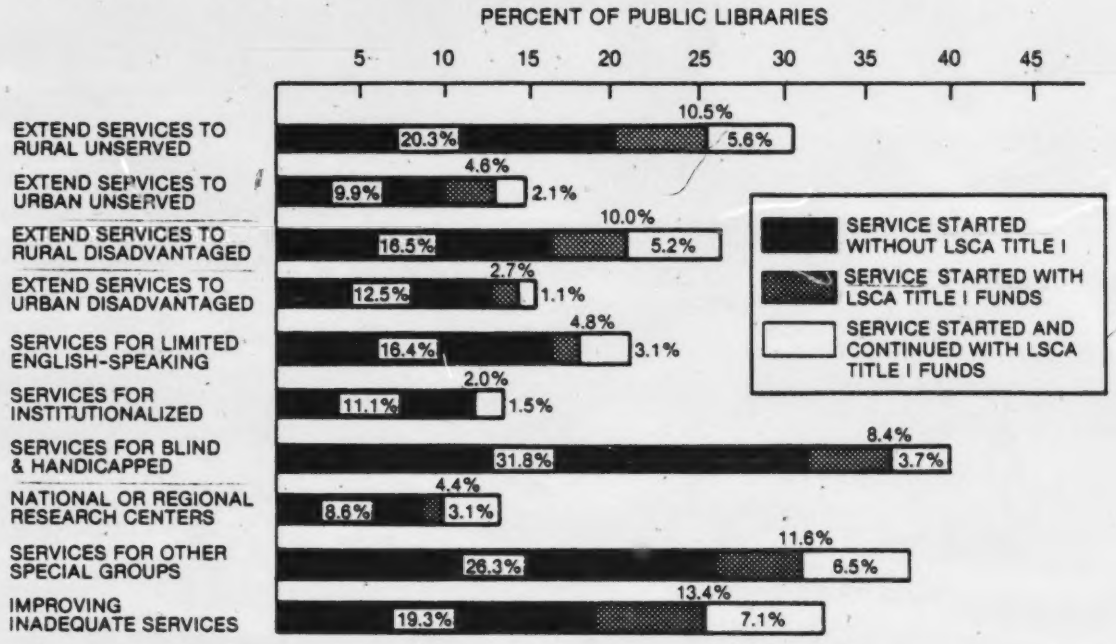
benefit (change in services or introduction of a new service) resulting from the LSCA Title I Program. In not one instance did public libraries that received a direct LSCA Title I grant fail to also identify at least one benefit derived from the Program. The most often cited benefits were increased access to resources of other libraries (resource sharing through regional and multitype library systems), more adequate public library services (improved staff, improved print/nonprint resources and/or receipt of an unspecified purpose grant), and the provision of services to blind and physically handicapped persons. Many of these benefits or new services were a direct result of programs of service provided by regional library systems and State Agencies. Moreover, public libraries that actually received direct grants of LSCA Title I funds were more likely to also report new services resulting from the Program. This was particularly true in instances where LSCA Title I enabled local public libraries to reach new user groups or introduce and provide a nontraditional service.

LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY RESPONSE TO LSCA TITLE I PRIORITIES

Another of the concerns of this evaluation was to determine the extent to which local public libraries have responded to the priorities of the Act. Local libraries administer in excess of 88 percent of the estimated $1.34 billion in local, State, and Federal funds expended in support of public libraries. They are responsible for most of the day-to-day service that constitute public library services. Although LSCA Title I is a very modestly funded program, the findings of this study indicate that public libraries have responded to the various priorities of the Act, but that the extent of this response varies. More importantly, this response has taken place largely through the use of available local and State resources.

As Figure 9 indicates, in only one priority area--services to blind and physically handicapped persons--have as many as 40 percent of local public libraries responded to an LSCA Title I priority with a specific or specialized service. Other major areas of response to priorities include services to special groups such as the aged (37.9% of all public libraries), improvement of services in geographic areas where they are inadequate (32.7% of all public libraries), and extending services to unserved persons in rural areas (30.8% of all public libraries). Although these percentages appear low, it is important to note that not all public libraries are faced with needs reflected by the priorities.

FIGURE 9: EXTENT TO WHICH PUBLIC LIBRARIES HAVE RESPONDED TO PRIORITIES OF LSCA TITLE I WITH AND WITHOUT USING LSCA TITLE I FUNDS



Among public libraries responding with specific services to one or more priority of the Act, in only three instances--improving inadequate services (41%), extending services to disadvantaged persons in rural areas (37.9%), and providing services in a regional or national resource center (33.7%)--did more than one-third of these libraries utilize LSCA Title I funding to start the services. This finding strongly reinforces the earlier finding that the effect of LSCA Title I has extended beyond the limited funding provided to local public libraries.

There are very clear indications that continued provision of these specialized services is to some degree dependent upon LSCA Title I funding. Between 13 percent and 30 percent of all public libraries responding to one or more priorities of the Act are currently utilizing LSCA Title I funds to support some or all of their response. More importantly, local public libraries that used LSCA Title I funds to respond to a priority are far more likely to depend upon LSCA Title I funds for the continuing support of their response (see Figure 9). At the lower extreme, of the 37.9 percent of all public libraries that used LSCA Title I funds to respond to the need to extend services to the rural disadvantaged, 38.9 percent now use LSCA Title I to support some or all of that service. At the other extreme, of the 14.9 percent of all public libraries that used LSCA Title I to start services for residents of State Institutions, fully 74.7 percent now use LSCA Title I to support some or all of that service.

EFFECTS OF LSCA TITLE I ON THE COVERAGE, ACCESS, AND ADEQUACY OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

The intent of LSCA Title I is to extend and improve public libraries generally and to respond to the information needs of groups of persons who traditionally have not benefitted from public library services. To examine progress in achieving this intent, the evaluation focused on changes in service coverage (availability), accessibility to priority groups identified in the legislation, and the adequacy of public libraries. The findings regarding those changes have been summarized below.

Coverage of Public Library Services

Public Library service coverage can occur in two primary ways: through the establishment of locally based and supported public libraries or through the provision of services by an agency outside the area (e.g., the State Agency or through agreements with adjacent jurisdictions having a public library capable of supporting some or all of the information needs of the unserved jurisdiction). The results of this evaluation indicate that LSCA Title I has contributed substantially to the establishment of locally supported public libraries and has contributed significantly to the provision of services through Statewide and regionally based programs of services.

Since 1965, 370 or 12.4 percent of all local jurisdictions without locally based services in the 34 States having unserved areas now have local public library services as a direct result of the LSCA Title I Program. Rural States and high poverty States report a higher incidence of unserved areas, and they were far more likely to use LSCA Title I to establish locally based public library service. Also, it is highly probable that considerable Program impact was achieved prior to 1965. Moreover, LSCA Title II (Construction) was instrumental in establishing or assisting the establishing of significant numbers of public libraries. Published Department of Education data estimate that 2,042 public library projects were approved during the 13-year period ending in Fiscal Year 1977. However, these construction efforts took place in localities already having some form of public library service.

As of 1980, the States estimate that there are 2,583 areas and jurisdictions of various types without any form of locally supported public library service. However, these areas represent only 9.3 percent of all counties and 20.1 percent of all small towns in the affected States.[10/] More importantly, many State Agencies report these areas are either unable or unwilling to provide funds to support locally based

services. The effect of LSCA Title I on efforts using alternative methods for extending public library services to unserved areas has been significant. One-half of all States have utilized LSCA Title I funds to support bookmobiles and/or books-by-mail services to provide library services to these areas. Forty-one percent of all States have used LSCA Title I funding to support efforts of regional library systems and other cooperative arrangements to deliver services to unserved areas. It is important to note that these methods are not restricted to completely unserved jurisdictions, but are also used as a means of extending services in jurisdictions that have locally supported public library services. In instances such as these, LSCA Title I funds often have been used to support bookmobile(s) serving outlying areas of a county, for example.

Accessibility of Public Library Services for Special Groups

The LSCA Title I Program has also had an effect on the establishment and provisions of public library services for residents of State supported institutional facilities, blind and physically handicapped persons, and limited English-speaking persons. Congress has selected out these groups as needing special efforts by public libraries to meet information needs, and, in the case of the former two, has also required that the States agree to maintain existing Federal support for services. Findings about the effect of LSCA Title I on services for these groups are summarized.

Residents of State Supported Institutions. LSCA Title I has had a significant effect on the establishment and extension of public library service for residents of State supported institutions but due to a variety of reasons, the effect of LSCA Title I on the quality of these library services has been less substantial. Since 1970, the number of State supported institutions receiving LSCA Title I-funded library services has increased by 79.4 percent (an increase from 592 institutions of all types in 1970 to 1,062 in 1979). Many State Agencies have provided direct services to institutions in response to the legislative priority since 1970 and in 1979 provided LSCA Title I-supported library services to 72.7 percent of all State supported institutions receiving some form of LSCA Title I support. Moreover, data collected in a 1976 survey by the American Library Association indicate that the proportion of the institutionalized population residing in facilities having LSCA Title I-supported library services had risen from 23.8 percent in 1967 to 57.3 percent in 1976. This 1976 figure may well underrepresent the 1980 percentage. Thus, major inroads have been made in establishing library services in State supported institutions.

However, the majority of services provided by State Agencies are consulting services, centralized purchasing and processing, and book grants. Often, the services provided by institutional projects are minimal. Major factors affecting efforts to establish and improve institutional library services are the conflicting goals (treatment and custody) of State institutions and resistance by State institutional agencies. Also, individual grants of LSCA Title I funds to institutions are very small in contrast with grants to other library agencies, suggesting that only minimal levels of service are provided.

Blind and Physically Handicapped Persons. The findings indicate that in conjunction with efforts by the Library of Congress, LSCA Title I has contributed significantly to the development and provision of a variety of library services for the blind. The data suggest that concurrent development and operation of the Library of Congress' National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) has been an important factor in the successes of LSCA Title I in this area. Over 65 percent of the State Agencies are regional NLS centers. Also, the States have directed LSCA Title I funds toward the support of NLS centers. In 1970, 77.9 percent of all centers received LSCA Title I funding. In 1979, that percentage had decreased to 61.9 percent, although the total number of centers receiving LSCA Title I funds had increased from 53 to 80. Fully, 28.8 percent of the States credit LSCA Title I with establishing regional and/or subregional centers. Nine States have implemented specialized automated circulation systems specifically designed for materials used by blind and physically handicapped persons. Also, among public libraries, one of the most frequently cited legislative priorities being addressed was the blind and physically handicapped.

However, there is little evidence to support a conclusion that LSCA Title I has substantially improved the ability of public libraries to meet the library service needs of the persons having other handicapping conditions. Some State Agencies have encouraged response to handicapped persons, most notably the hearing impaired. In general, however, efforts to reach a broader range of handicapped persons has been inhibited by scarcity of funding to improve the accessibility of library facilities and difficulty in identifying these persons.

Limited English-Speaking. Response to the limited English-speaking priority has been uneven. For the most part, the response has taken the form of locally based specialized services or general services provided by the local public library.

The amount of LSCA Title I funds and State funds expended to directly benefit limited English-speaking persons has been very low (less than 3% during Fiscal Year 1978) and has actually decreased since 1975. There are no reliable indicators of whether or not increased numbers of limited English-speaking are now served by public libraries; nor is there any indication of whether or not LSCA Title I has contributed in any substantial way toward increasing these numbers. Further, data from the evaluation indicate that many States have not taken an advocacy role; rather the impetus is presumed to be at the local level. In most cases this presumption is in error.

There are a number of reasons for this apparent absence of effect. There has been an absence of clear direction and guidance at the Federal level. Program regulations applying to the limited English-speaking are vague. They fail to adequately define the population and relate it to public libraries and public library services. There appears to be only limited State support for responding to this priority in any systematic fashion. Factors beyond the Program's influence also restrict response by the States. Information is limited about this population and not capable of supporting planning efforts. There is not a highly developed publishing industry for foreign language materials. Finally, there is a real shortage of bilingual (minority) library professionals.

Urban and Rural Disadvantaged. The legislation, as interpreted in Program regulations suggests a fairly broad range of cultural, economic, educational and social hardships that may prevent an individual from using library services designed for persons without these limitations or hardships. Little of substantial quality at the Federal or State level has been accomplished to develop better measures of who or what groups of persons are affected by these limitations. Of greater importance is that unique needs of these groups are not necessarily taken into consideration when funds are distributed by the States. Rather, the condition and needs of public libraries as institutions is considered. Suffice to say, almost all State libraries, regional public libraries, and local public libraries have in their service areas some numbers of poor, cultural or ethnic minorities, and undereducated. At the same time, a major influence on decisions affecting the distribution of the Federal funds at the State level is the adequacy of public libraries. However, there is no information to support a positive relationship between the quality (adequacy) of a public library and the population it serves, nor that the two are considered together in the allocation of funds.

In essence, there does not appear to have been either systematic or significant efforts to direct LSCA Title I funds to meet the specific needs of these disadvantaged groups, although there are notable exceptions among the States. The scope of the urban and rural disadvantaged priority is not sufficiently specific to permit a measurable response.

Adequacy of Public Library Services

A second significant mandate of the LSCA Title I Program has been to assist efforts of States to improve inadequate public library services. Adequate service represents an important goal toward which all public libraries must strive. However, the findings of this study indicate that efforts to monitor progress and more importantly to assess the effects of LSCA Title I on progress made to achieve this goal are fraught with severe limitations. Measures of library service adequacy currently employed by most State Agencies and public libraries are primarily based on inputs (e.g., funding levels, materials, staff size, and plant size) rather than measures of outputs that reflect client impacts. The measures in use are highly dependent upon the availability of funds and because of this they cannot be reliably contrasted over time. Moreover, standards prescribing adequacy change from time to time so as to better reflect the cost of providing services thereby causing the status of a library's adequacy to shift somewhat arbitrarily. Because of this situation, it is both misleading and incorrect to attempt to attribute any direct causal effect of LSCA Title I on the adequacy of public libraries. However, certain limited effects of the Program upon the adequacy of public libraries can be addressed indirectly.

The States report that significantly large sums of LSCA Title I funds are being used to improve the adequacy of existing and new public library services. During 1978, at least 68 percent of all LSCA Title I funds were used at the State, regional and local levels to support and/or improve library services. The majority of these funds provide long-term support for those services. Moreover, LSCA Title I has served as an important source of stimulus for expanding and extending public library services. To the extent that this extension has taken place, adequacy has also improved. Also, while somewhat misleading because of the quality of the measure, the States estimated that in 1956 only 3.2 percent of the Nation's population had adequate library service. In 1976 that figure had risen to 12.5 percent, although the extent to which LSCA Title I contributed directly to this improvement can only be inferred. A third indicator of the impact of LSCA Title I upon adequacy is that

public libraries report they have been successful in generating increased local funding as a direct outcome of LSCA Title I. Among public libraries receiving an LSCA Title I grant, 25.3 percent cited this effect. Fourth, LSCA Title I has also had a major influence on the development of systems of public libraries and this is closely related to the adequacy of service.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE EVALUATION FINDINGS

The research findings of this study suggest a number of implications for the LSCA Title I Program as currently structured and operated at the Federal and State levels. First, there is a clear difference between expressed Federal level expectations and the reality of Program operations. According to current Federal level expectations, the Program should be predominantly characterized by demonstrations of new services and innovations, and significant expenditures of funds to stimulate and provide services to a range of groups with special or unmet needs. In reality and as best can be determined, the Program is actually characterized by considerable support of long-term programs and activities, and even more considerable expenditures for activities that are at best only indirectly related to the needs of the various priority or target populations identified in the legislation.

The findings indicate that the Federal government has, in effect, become an ongoing source of funding for public libraries. When LSCA Title I funds are used to implement a service, there is a strong tendency for recipient libraries to continue using LSCA Title I funds to support these services. Increasingly, local libraries are unable to obtain sizable increases in local funding and must compete for funds with other local government services having a higher priority. In effect, a long-term commitment develops that has a subsequent effect of reducing the flexibility of State Agencies in their efforts to use LSCA Title I funds to address changing needs.

LSCA Title I has introduced structural changes that it now supports. In spite of the fact that many States view LSCA Title I funding as unpredictable, many States now rely heavily upon these funds. Withdrawal of LSCA Title I funds used for demonstrations would cause short-term disruptions among the affected agencies (e.g., discontinuation of a trial service or activity). The same cannot be said for the remaining 60 percent of LSCA Title I funds used for ongoing support purposes. Redirection or withdrawal of these funds would be expected to cause considerable setbacks and reductions in levels of service. Further, it is by no means clear that

State or local revenue resources could or would be diverted to make up those losses. Indeed, while State funds for public libraries have increased significantly over the period of time that LSCA Title I has been operational, these sources have not escaped the effects of inflation. The result is that when State Agencies are faced with diminishing resources, there is far less willingness to undertake risk in the form of new services and the introduction of new technologies. If major changes and expansion of services continue to be nationally desired outcomes, then significant resources will have to be made available to underwrite these changes, and more stringent controls will have to govern the use of these Federal resources.

Another implication of the findings is that there appears to be a strong linkage between effects upon public library users and use of LSCA Title I at the local level. At present only 35 percent of all funds are used at the local level, and even less are used to support direct services. Clearly, indirect uses--those that strengthen State, regional and local libraries--tend to improve the adequacy of services. However, it is through direct service support, especially at the local level, that impacts on individuals are achieved. This paradox is characteristic of the current Federal legislation. On the one hand, public libraries as institutions should be improved. On the other, the needs of a variety of special population groups should be responded to. However, these two needs are not always compatible given the current LSCA Legislation. The categorical grant structure precludes significant Federal control of the use of funds, and the States respond to the pressures of their primary constituency group--public libraries and not users necessarily. If both of these Federal expectations are to prevail, then the funding structure of the Program would have to be altered so that each could be addressed.

The demonstrated importance of systems of libraries as a means of providing more cost-efficient service and as a means of increasing reasonable access to information resources appears to also have implications for the types of libraries providing those resources. Academic and special libraries offer significant resource potential as has been clearly demonstrated through activities funded with LSCA Title III funds. Academic and special libraries provide a considerable wealth of resources often matched only by larger public libraries. The data clearly indicate that multitype involvement is occurring and will occur in the future, especially if the States are provided greater flexibility in this area. Any concern that LSCA Title I would be used to subsidize nonpublic libraries is offset by the benefits that

could be expected to accrue. Moreover, it is highly likely that there would be considerable counterpressure by public libraries to maintain current levels of support provided to them with LSCA Title I funds. Current prescriptions barring the use of LSCA Title I funds by nonpublic libraries effectively limit the range of involvement that is possible. However, as a recent evaluation of LSCA Title III indicated, significant amounts of LSCA Title I funds are expended in efforts to promote and achieve library cooperation and networking (e.g., systems of libraries).

If more wide spread involvement of other types of libraries is to occur, then questions regarding governance structure will have to be resolved. A number of States cannot distribute funds to quasi-governmental agencies such as regional libraries, suggesting the further definition of the appropriate role of States in the support and control of systems of libraries is needed.

The findings suggest that the emphasis upon extending public library services to unserved areas ought to be reconsidered and/or redirected in the future. Efforts by the States to establish locally based public libraries have been diminishing over the last five years. State Agencies report that many of the jurisdictions without local public libraries are unable and/or unwilling to generate sufficient revenues to establish public libraries. For some time, State Agencies have emphasized establishing larger units of service able to provide at least minimal levels of services to these localities. The data suggest (1) that it is not reasonable to anticipate significant future progress in establishing new locally supported public libraries in jurisdictions now without public libraries, and (2) that it may no longer be reasonable to use establishment of new public libraries in unserved jurisdictions as a measure of Program achievement and progress at the State or national levels. Economic trends, the ability of localities to pay, and the improving and expanding ability to address basic service needs of these areas through larger units of service reinforce this point.

It is evident that significant inroads have been made in establishing services for residents of State supported institutions and blind persons. The maintenance of effort and matching requirements stipulated by the Congress for services responding to the needs of blind and physically handicapped persons and the institutionalized has influenced the effectiveness of State response. Legislative priority alone does not provide a significant lever for stimulating State response as data on the limited English-speaking priority indicate. Using the maintenance of effort requirement,

State Agencies are able to establish programs with a high degree of certainty that subsequent State level budgetary or legislative decisions will not strip away funds. However, maintenance of effort may also have a negative effect in that it can create a cost ceiling that limits the ability of the States to expand programs for these groups or to undertake one-time activities to improve key aspects of services.

The findings also indicate that there is significant need to improve the quality of library services for institutionalized persons and that there is a continuing need for the Federal presence (LSCA Title I) in this area. The findings also suggest that there is a continuing need for a Federal presence that supports services for visually handicapped persons and a more defined or directed role for the physically handicapped including the hearing impaired. More often than not, there is a significantly higher cost per unit of service for the visually and hearing impaired. The Library of Congress has established a system for producing and distributing materials on a limited basis; however, this system does not provide support funding. Structural modifications to remove physical barriers of public libraries cannot be addressed using LSCA Title I funds and LSCA Title II (construction) has not been funded since 1973.

If improvement of public library capacity to respond to the information needs of limited English-speaking persons is to remain a Federal priority, the evaluation findings indicate that there must be a clear enunciation of Federal level expectations about bilingual groups that should be emphasized and other factors that should be considered, such as economic or educational condition. It would then be incumbent upon the affected State Agencies to implement meaningful plans and programs to respond to these expectations.

Adequacy of public library service represents the current and dominant focus of most State efforts to improve public libraries. It is the culmination of efforts to first establish and/or otherwise provide services with some proximity to potential users, and second to make services available or accessible to groups of persons falling outside the mainstream of existing services. Complicating all these efforts and especially the upgrading of existing services, is cost. Increasingly, the ability to pay is being outstripped by the cost of providing services (particularly at the local level). This is causing a shift away from the goal of improvement toward one of maintaining existing levels of services in the face of diminishing revenues. This circumstance appears to raise significant concern in light of measures used to assess the adequacy of public libraries.

It is not clear that a simple increase of funding would necessarily increase the adequacy of public library services. There is a far greater potential that increased funds would improve the ability of libraries to maintain and perhaps gradually improve the quality of services. The more appropriate and efficient area to improve public library services that most States are employing is the development of public library systems, many of which were started using LSCA Title I funds. Larger, more cost efficient units of service such as regional and, where appropriate, Statewide systems may provide the best means of upgrading public library services. Regionalization appears to increase the readiness of State governments to assume expanded roles in public library services.

Two additional implications are suggested for the LSCA Title I Program. First, if adequacy of public library services is to remain a Federal concern, it is clear that: (1) better measures of adequacy are needed; and (2) the accountability of the States must be substantially upgraded. Both of these needs must be addressed at a Federal level through existing planning and monitoring obligations. Second, it may be desirable to examine the way in which LSCA Title I funds are matched by States. These findings reinforce the importance of programs of State aid for public libraries. However, many States take advantage of the permissibility of matching with local funds--funds that are only peripherally related to State programs responding to LSCA Title I. Increased emphasis upon the role of State funds as matching revenues may, in fact, provide a number of benefits. First, the data suggest that States with State aid programs are more likely to use LSCA Title I funds to support short-term demonstrations. Second, State aid appears to facilitate the formation of library systems. A Federal level requirement affecting State aid and/or State matching could have the effect of generating increased State funding for public libraries that would in turn, improve the likelihood of increased use of LSCA Title I funds in ways that are more responsive to Federal priorities.

Finally, the Federal government has not assumed a highly directive or controlling role in the administration of the Program. Reasons for this include the mandated stipulation that the States and localities should not be interfered with as a result of the Act. More importantly, successive Administrations have not taken on what might be termed an advocacy role with regard to library services. The immediate manifestation of this Federal posture has been ineffective State use of planning processes and corresponding Federal review/approval authority allowed for under the Act. Few State plans submitted under this Program provide Federal

Program managers with an effective means of assuring that the States are accountable to the programmatic expectations of the law. Also, State Agencies cannot be expected to operate in isolation. They are subject to the influences of State legislatures, governmental philosophies, budgetary limitations, and organizational barriers. If current patterns of use of LSCA Title I funds are not in keeping with Federal intent and expectations, then it appears that the Legislation and the authority of Federal Program management will have to undergo considerable change.

STUDY METHODS

The evaluation of the effects and operations of LSCA Title I required the development of a study method using many sources of information and data. The study method was specifically designed to respond to the four basic study objectives identified earlier. It was shaped and influenced by five factors related to the measurement of program effects and change.

- First, LSCA Title I has been in operation since 1956; however, only recently has any meaningful attempt been made to examine comprehensively the effects and impacts of the LSCA Title I Program. One real manifestation of this problem is that many significant Program-induced changes may have occurred prior to 1965 (as far back as this study was capable of reaching) when LSCA Title I funds represented a larger support source of efforts to develop public library services. Although extensive efforts were made to collect as much information as possible for this early period, it is likely that this study underestimates Program effects during the Program's early history.
- Second, LSCA Title I represents less than five percent of the total national outlay of funds for public library services. Also, these funds are often commingled with State and local funds, and it becomes very difficult empirically to isolate the true or unique effect(s) of the Program. To circumvent this limitation, a mail survey of public libraries was conducted to estimate more accurately the extent to which LSCA Title I was actually used to initiate changes consistent with the priorities of the Act. Also fiscal data were collected that included State and Federally funded activity undertaken in response to the Act rather than focusing solely on the Federal funds.
- Third, with very few exceptions, public libraries concentrate most data gathering efforts on inputs of resources and the movement of materials entrusted to their care. Very little attention has been given to the need to monitor the interaction between the client and the public library. Because of these library-related factors, this evaluation did not attempt to measure client effects in the absence of a clearly defined relationship between the public library and the user. Measures of institutional changes and professional perceptions

of effects upon users has been heavily relied upon. Even if the study had followed a more traditional approach and surveyed the user population, its findings in all probability would not have accurately reflected the operating reality of the Program now and in the past.

- Fourth, the States have responded to the legislation in highly varied ways. The legislation is specific in assuming a posture of noninterference in the usage of funds ("... uses of the funds provided under this Act shall be reserved to the States and their local subdivisions."). Furthermore, there are variations in the manner in which the Program is administered by the States. Also, the States entered into the Program having unique contextual and structural attributes that often dictate the limits within which Federal funds will be used. This effectively prohibits the use of a single set of outcome measures. Because of the importance of these various contextual factors, extensive attention was given to the task of identifying the most salient factors and examining their influences in the explanation of variations in Program outcomes.

- Fifth, the measurement of the adequacy of public library services presents a unique and potentially significant limitation upon this evaluation effort. Adequacy represents a set of ideals or standards against which performance can be compared. When applied to public library services, not only are the standards built upon inputs--levels of funding, size of collections, size of staff, and physical plant characteristics--rather than outputs that focus on levels of services and other client related measures, they also vary from State to State. Comparable measures are not available. The end result is that while the Act specifically cites improved adequacy as a goal or objective, measures of response to the goal cannot be obtained directly nor do those measures have any direct bearing upon the service oriented expectations of the Act.

In sum, the study method was not intended to provide a definitive assessment of the current status of public libraries. Rather, it focuses directly upon the LSCA Title I Program. Nor does this study provide a detailed accounting of how the Program has affected the lives of individuals. Instead, it documents many of the changes in public libraries since 1956 and discusses the role of LSCA Title I in those changes. To do this, data were gathered from the following sources: (1) the universe of State Library Administrative Agencies; (2) Chairpersons of each State's Advisory Council on Libraries; (3) State legislative staff members having oversight responsibility for State public library programs; (4) a nationally representative sample of library projects reported as receiving LSCA Title I support during Federal Fiscal Year 1978; (5) a national representative sample of public libraries; and, (6) extant data, where appropriate.

Sampling Design and Data Collection

A variety of sampling and data collection procedures were used. Each of these is described below and summarized in Table 2.

State Library Administrative Agencies and related respondents. Because the Program under study allows for maximum discretion at the State level, and because of the diverse ways in which States have responded to the priorities of LSCA Title I, the universe of 52 State Library Administrative Agencies was surveyed. For purposes of this study, the universe of State Library Agencies included the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, but excludes the outlying territories (Guam, Northern Marianas, Marianas, and American Samoa). Each State Agency visit lasted two days, during which interviews were conducted with the Chief State Library Administrative Officer, the LSCA Title I Coordinator, and at least two senior State Agency staff members. In addition, information was gathered on project expenditures of LSCA Title I funds and State and local funds during Federal Fiscal Years 1975 and 1978. Along with fiscal data on each 1975 and 1978

TABLE 2: SAMPLE SIZES AND RESPONSE RATES BY TYPE OF RESPONDENT

TYPE OF RESPONDENT	SIZE OF UNIVERSE	SAMPLE SIZE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	RESPONSE RATE	SURVEY METHOD
State Library Administrative Agencies	52	52	52 (196)(a)	100.0%	In-Person Interview
Chairpersons, State Advisory Councils on Libraries	52	52	50	96.2	In-Person Interview
State Legislative Staff	52	52	35	67.3	In-Person Interview
Fiscal Year 1978 LSCA Title I Project Directors	1,600	100	100	100.0	In-Person Interview
Fiscal Year 1978 LSCA Title I Project Staff	9,200	200	97	48.5(b)	In-Person Interview
LSCA Title I Project Setting Directors and Staff	7,900	400	238	59.5(b)	In-Person Interview
Public Library Directors	8,300	504	485	96.2	Mail Survey

(a) Numbers of respondents interviewed during site visits--included are Chief State Library Officers, LSCA Title I Coordinators, and other senior administrators.

(b) Response rate appears low because expected number of available respondents sufficiently knowledgeable of projects was over-estimated in study design.

LSCA project, data were collected on the primary beneficiary of each project (e.g., general public, blind and physically handicapped perons), the primary output of the project (e.g., staff salaries and materials), and other project specific data.

Also during site visits to the State Agencies, interviews were conducted with the Chairpersons of the State Advisory Council on Libraries and staff members assigned to State Legislative committees or subcommittees having oversight for public library programs.

LSCA Title I Projects. LSCA Title I projects are defined as public library-related services and activities for which LSCA Title I funds were expended or obligated during Fiscal Year 1978. A nationally representative sample of 100 projects was selected through a stratified random sampling technique. The three variables used to stratify the sample were: (1) the administrative locus of the project; (2) the combined or total level at which the project was funded (LSCA Title I funds and State funds); and (3) the type of targeting that characterizes the project vis-a-vis the priorities of the legislation. Selection of project directors and setting directors was accomplished as a direct result of the project sampling procedure. Project staff and setting staff were selected using probability methods in order to provide a nationally representative sample.

During site visits to each of the projects, interviews were conducted with: (1) the project director--the individual having day-to-day managerial responsibility for the technical and operational aspects of the project; (2) project staff--professionals assigned to the project to conduct the technical and/or operational aspects of the project; (3) setting director--the individual having overall administrative responsibility for the agency that sponsors the LSCA Title I project (e.g., the director of a county or city public library); and (4) setting staff--professionals employed on a full-time basis by the sponsoring agency, and are (a) recipients of the service (e.g., participate in a continuing education program), or (b) make use of, or are in a position to observe, the effects of the LSCA Title I project upon the library, its services, or its clients.

Public Library Survey. For purposes of this study, a public library was defined as a library that serves all residents of a given community, district, or region, without cost and receives its financial support, in whole or in part, from public funds. This definition includes tax-supported municipal, county, and regional public libraries, and privately controlled libraries that render general library service to a

community without charge. A national probability sample of public libraries was selected based on universe characteristics information furnished by the National Center for Education Statistics from the universe of all public libraries in the United States. Two variables were used to stratify the sample--population size of service area and geographic region. The disproportional stratified sampling design is capable of providing national estimates as well as selected subpopulation estimates for different sizes of public libraries. To ensure that nonresponse was minimal and well within accepted limits, the sample size was increased by 15 percent and follow-up procedures were employed.

Data Analysis Techniques

Following the data collection activities, all survey forms underwent intensive editing procedures by trained project staff members to minimize item nonresponse and to resolve any response ambiguities. These forms were then keypunched, verified, and entered onto a computer data base. Each set of data (e.g., State Agency, LSCA project, and public library survey) was then subjected to three stages of analysis.

- First, univariate analyses were performed to address pertinent study objectives (e.g., the use of LSCA Title I funds by States and LSCA projects). Percentages, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion were examined to determine any underlying patterns in the data and to provide descriptions of the use of LSCA Title I funds. This initial step provided the foundation for subsequent data analyses.
- Second, variables were selected because of their relevance to key research questions posed during the design phase of the study and because of concerns arising from the preliminary univariate analyses. For example, in the public library survey, emphasis is on comparisons between library services offered by libraries receiving LSCA Title I funding and services of public libraries receiving no direct Title I funds. Percentages and means comparisons and contingency table analyses were performed. Where sample data were used, appropriate tests (e.g., Chi-square tests and tests for differences in proportions) of significance were incorporated into the analyses.
- Third, the impact of multiple factors on the use of Title I funds and benefits derived from the LSCA Title I Program were examined. Multiple regression analysis procedures and multivariate contingency table techniques were utilized as the primary data analysis approaches. As part of this analysis effort, several summated scales were constructed using factor analysis techniques to reduce data.

FOOTNOTES

1/(20 U.S.C. 351) Enacted Dec. 30, 1970, P.L. 91-600, sec. 110, 84 Stat. 1666.

2/(20 U.S.C. 351) Enacted Dec. 30, 1970, P.L. 91-600, sec. 110, 84 Stat. 1666.

3/P.L. 91-600, (20 U.S.C. 351), as amended.

4/Library development refers to planning, technical assistance, and related activities intended to assist local libraries. Library operations refer to the provision of services to clients or performance of activities such as filling interlibrary loan requests, centralized processing of materials, and the like.

5/Sources for these data include the 1977 Census of Governments and information collected in this study.

6/These figures represent the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

7/This estimate is based on data reported by 48 of the 50 states. Data was not reported for the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

8/It is important to recognize that LSCA Title I funds are expended in concert with considerable State and even some local revenues. These State revenues include funds used to operate State Agencies and funds disbursed as State aid to local and regional public libraries. Often these funds are reported as part of a State's matching share. Of the combined $193.51 million in LSCA Title I, State and local funds expended for public libraries in Fiscal Year 1975, only 28 percent or $54.14 million was provided through the LSCA Title I Program. In Fiscal Year 1978, the total combined amount had increased to $236.56 million, of which only 25 percent or $58.29 million was provided through the LSCA Title I Program. Of these combined amounts, only 11.1 percent during Fiscal Year 1975 and 9.7 percent during Fiscal Year 1978 represented expenditures of LSCA Title I funds that were not combined with State funds.

9/Long-term funding refers to the open-ended commitment to support a library activity or set of related library activities. Demonstrations refer to a pre-defined and agreed upon period of performance during which the recipient agency attempts to implement a new service with the intent of assuming the cost of the service with local revenues.

10/When these percentages are adjusted to reflect the whole nation, only 4.4% of all county jurisdictions and less than 6.0 percent of all small towns do not have locally supported public libraries.